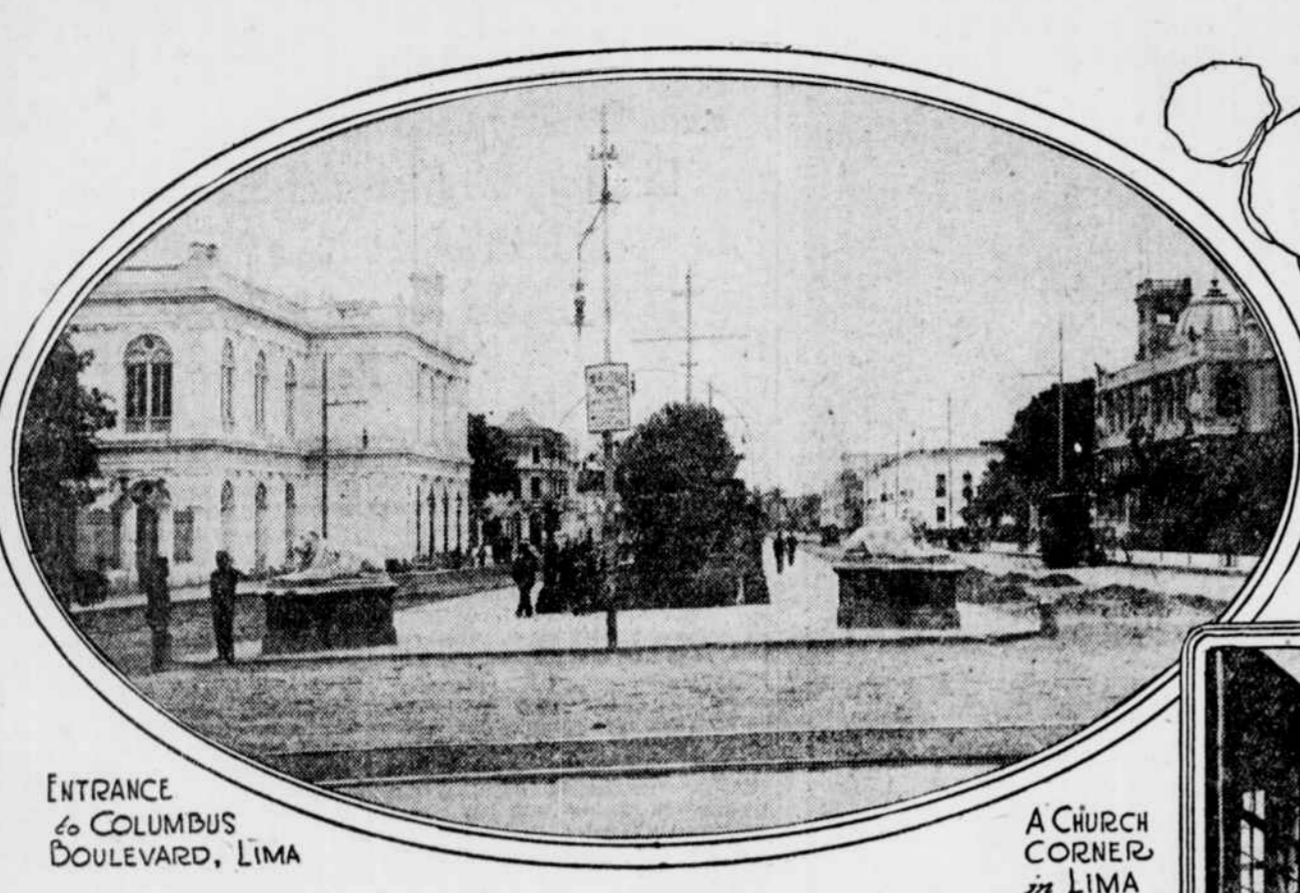


LATIN-AMERICANS HAVE BUSINESS WAYS ALL THEIR OWN



ENTRANCE
to COLUMBUS
BOULEVARD, LIMA

A CHURCH
CORNER
in LIMA



THE BULLFIGHT in LIMA - READY FOR THE
DEATH STROKE

Anecdotes Told Here by Mr. Pepper of the Experiences of Certain Northerners Seeking Trade Relations in South America Point a Timely Moral of Great Importance.

By Charles M. Pepper.

Lima, Peru, October 29, 1913.

DON JOAQUIN BERMUDEZ was a wealthy landowner up in the Andean tablelands of Ecuador. That was not his real name, but it will do for the present purpose. When the Guayaquil & Quito Railroad was carried up from the coast to the capital he was not friendly to the innovation. He became the leader of the anti-railway party in his section.

After the road had been in operation for a while, he appeared one day with a friend at the office of Archer Harman, who was the managing head of the enterprise. They knew each other by reputation. Harman had been anxious to get traffic for the road and had had his people talk about the benefit it would be to the inhabitants of the tablelands to have their products carried down to the coast. There had been an intimation that this might be done for some trial shipments free.

Don Joaquin, after a number of polite nothings had been exchanged, came to the point, and the dialogue ran somewhat as follows:

"Is it true, this report, Señor Harman, that your railway would like to carry twenty carloads of barley for me down to Guayaquil?"

"Yes, Don Joaquin, it would give us great pleasure to carry twenty carloads of barley for you down to Guayaquil."

"And is it true, Señor Harman, that the railway desires to do itself the favor of carrying these twenty carloads of barley free?"

"Yes, Don Joaquin, the road will be pleased to do you the favor of taking your twenty carloads down to Guayaquil without charge."

"A thousand thanks, Señor Harman, I will arrange the matter very soon."

"The railway is yours, Don Joaquin, the say you have that barley ready."

"Good day, Señor Harman."

"Good day, Don Joaquin."

MORE CONVERSATION.

The next morning Don Joaquin again appeared at the railway office. The greetings of the day were exchanged, and then, after some discussion of weather and crops, with especial reference to barley, he casually remarked:

"Should it so happen, Señor Harman, that my crop is not all I expect it to be and I have only ten carloads of barley, would the railway do itself the kindness to haul those ten carloads without exacting compensation?"

Harman saw his expected advertisement losing some of its importance. Ten carloads, nevertheless, would be sufficient to draw favorable public attention to the railway, and he could not in the presence of the latter's friends refuse the supposed proffer, so he said somewhat curtly:

"All right, Don Joaquin. Have your ten carloads ready."

Good afternoons were said, and Don Joaquin took his leave. That evening he met the railway manager at the club, where there were a number of his friends.

"I have been telling my friends, Señor Harman," he remarked, "of the agreeableness of your railway in placing itself at my disposition to transport the five carloads of barley which I will have in readiness within a few days and, as you will observe, they are extremely gratified."

Harman gave a start at the calmness with which Don Joaquin reduced the proposed advertising from ten to five carloads, but he could not in the presence of the latter's friends refuse the supposed proffer, so he said somewhat curtly:

"Very well, Don Joaquin. We will be ready for those five carloads."

THE DISAPPEARING BARLEY.

Don Joaquin graciously bade the railway manager good night and went to finish the game of dominoes with his friends. The next morning Don Joaquin appeared at the railway office. His manner was somewhat deprecatory and apologetic.

"Good morning, Señor Harman."

"Good morning, Don Joaquin."

"Señor Harman, I have the extreme pleasure to inform you that I will not be able to impose so great a burden on your railway as you generously offered that it should bear. I find that my barley crop this season is much less in quantity than I had flattered myself in believing it would be. But I suppose, if it should so turn out that I should not have more than half a carload your railway would charge itself with transporting the barley without compensation, as you so kindly suggested the other day?"

The railway manager exploded and told Don Joaquin to get out. In thus dismissing an influential landowner he made a mistake. When Don Joaquin originally suggested twenty carloads of barley he had no idea that the railway manager would accept any such quantity. In coming down to five carloads he was reaching the point where he thought the railway would secure what it wanted by splitting that quantity in half. Had Harman con-

tinued the offer even down to the half carload, Don Joaquin would have gotten together his neighbors, and by the time the cargo was ready there would have been four or five carloads of barley for the railroad to transport free as an advertisement for itself.

DIFFERENT HABITS OF THOUGHT.

After that, he and his neighbors would have given it all their freight. This was simply one of the many cases where the difference in habits of thought and business customs resulted in a fiasco. It is one of the things that Americans have yet to learn that when they are in Latin America they must adapt themselves to the customs that obtain.

Sometimes it is the Spanish-American who entirely fails to grasp the North American point of view. The head of a big house in Chili acquired a part of his education in London, and to the business methods of his own country he added a little of English conservatism. One day when the craze for business efficiency in saving time was at its height in the United States a letter reached him from New York. It probably was an important letter, because it came from a strong company and it bore the signature of the head of the company. The Chilean merchant saw stamped across it the words, "until then entirely new to him. 'Dictated but not read.'"

If he had gotten so far as the signature he might have had a suspicion that it was a rubber stamp signature, but he did not get that far. He looked at the neatly typewritten letter, file number, etc., slowly read the phrase "Dictated but not read" and tossed the communication into the waste basket. Later letters of this kind became more common, and his clerks, knowing that some of them really related to business, would fish them out of the waste basket after the stately old head of the firm had

thrown them there. But these letters should have received his personal attention and many important negotiations suffered in consequence.

Business correspondence is still something of an art with the old-established Spanish-American houses. While they have clerks who are familiar with English and while sometimes a crisp business letter from New York or elsewhere might appeal to them by its terseness, this is

not the rule. There is a certain formality which they expect to use in addressing their correspondents and in affixing their signature, and when they are addressed they demand the same courtesy. It is useless to talk to them about the waste of time and the importance of getting down to the point. Before the typewriter was introduced the head of any large concern would have one of his clerks as an amanuensis, sitting across the table from him.

He would dictate his letters to the clerk, pausing occasionally to polish a sentence, sometimes stopping to think over what he wanted to say and not infrequently conveying a personal compliment to whom-ever he was addressing.

The typewriter has not entirely changed this, and the correspondence that emanates from almost any Spanish-American commercial house is courteous and comprehensive. Some of these firms do a very large business and have an extensive correspondence. They do not seem to think that they lose time, which is money, by taking the time to write or dictate their letters carefully, and they read them over to make sure they have said what they want to say. "Dictated but not read" may do for New York and Chicago in communication with each other, but not when corresponding with merchants in Spanish America.

SURPASSING FICTION.

There is one instance of American insight into Spanish-American business methods that surpasses fiction. Years ago a New York firm found some orders coming into it without being solicited. The head of the house, an old-time merchant, decided that if this was happening there must be a good deal of trade worth going after. He accordingly went after it.

An American, though without commercial training and without himself suspecting that he was a salesman, was chosen to make the initial trip to South America. He had the rare advantage of having lived in Latin-American countries

and of knowing the customs and the prevailing language thoroughly. That may have been the reason why he was selected.

Don Antonio Blank, whose headquarters were somewhere else than in the city from which I am writing, was the head of a large establishment whose business extended over a good section of the interior of South America. In some of his warehouses half a million dollars' worth of goods might be found almost any time. They were not American goods. The bulk of them came from Europe—from Great Britain and Spain chiefly.

One day the American travelling man appeared in Don Antonio's town. He had provided himself with the means of introduction which he knew would be necessary. He did not get acquainted with Don Antonio until he knew about everybody else in the community. The acquaintance progressed slowly, but after a time Don Antonio invited him around to the club, which was the only one in the town, to play dominoes.

HE PLAYED DOMINOES.

If the travelling man had been like most of his kind the thought of playing dominoes would have filled him with mirth, and he most likely would have suggested another game better known in the United States. But this particular American went to the club and played dominoes, and, somewhat to Don Antonio's surprise, beat him. Of course, he had to come again so that Don Antonio could have his revenge. Then the American, after a casual call at Don Antonio's office, in which no mention was made of business, took a trip to the country for a few days.

When he returned he again dropped into Don Antonio's office, told incidents of his trip, inquired after Don Antonio's family and then started in to talk business. He got a small trial order—small, that is, for a house of Don Antonio's extensive connections, something like \$20,000. Though his mission was concluded, he remained in town a week or so longer. In the meantime having an occasional game of dominoes with Don Antonio. Then he bade everybody goodbye and quietly went back to New York.

The sequel to this story, if it followed the usual order of new business for American firms in South America, would be that in the course of two or three months Don Antonio's firm got word that the New York firm was unable to fill its order, the domestic trade in the meantime having picked up, and there being no longer any need of dumping surplus stock abroad. Or else, a curt letter would come along notifying Don Antonio that the goods had been shipped and that a sight draft had been made on him, as the firm's rule was not to allow time on foreign orders. Later the goods would come along half smashed, owing to bad packing, and in a generally unsatisfactory condition. And that would be the end of Don Antonio's purchase of American goods.

ON TO HIS JOB.

Nothing of the sort happened. About two months after the order was given Don Antonio received a letter from the head of the New York firm. For a business letter, it was a very discursive communication. Moreover, it was written in English, which is not a discursive language. The reason was given by the head of the firm. He felt that in opening up what he knew would be a permanent business connection with Don Antonio's firm, he should be acquainted with Don Antonio himself. Unfortunately, he had not learned Spanish when he was a young man, and he presumed that Don Antonio had not learned English. But he was sure that some member of Don Antonio's family, possibly one of his grandsons, knew English, and would be good enough to translate the letter for him, for in these days it was important that the young men of both countries should know the language of the other. He himself was having his grandson, who was in, in his office, learn Spanish.

The letter then went on to discuss business matters, with an occasional digression. In closing, the New York merchant referred briefly and casually to the financial part of the transaction. He had not been informed as to Don Antonio's preference in this matter. The firm understood that long credits were the rule in South America. Would Don Antonio prefer six months to sixty days? If so, that would be entirely agreeable.

A LETTER BEARS FRUIT.

Don Antonio, as the New York merchant surmised, did not know English, nor did any of his grandsons, but several of his correspondence clerks knew the language, and one of them with imagination and with the faculty of genuine translation in not being too literal translated the communication. The next day Don Antonio gave orders that his grandsons should begin the study of English, and also that two granddaughters, who were in a convent where English was not taught, should be transferred to one where they could learn the language. He himself wrote out the answer to the New York merchant's communication.

That was the beginning of what has since become a very large business. The story is so unlike the usual American methods in seeking new business in foreign countries and so much like fiction that I would doubt if myself had not seen Don Antonio one day several years ago showed me the letter he received and given me some details of the large trade he was doing with the New York firm. Don Antonio died three years ago, but there are other Spanish-Americans like him still in business.

For the Americans who come to South America introductions which will enable them to have access to the clubs are desirable. There are good clubs everywhere—in Guayaquil, in Lima, in Valparaiso and in Santiago. The wise American will, so far as the hospitality of his fellow countrymen and his British cousins permits, avoid making himself too much at home in the English-speaking clubs and will cultivate the social intercourse which the native clubs afford him the opportunity to enjoy. But if he is sensible he will not talk business at the club. Other forms of hospitality he may accept or decline, according to his own wishes, and no offence will be taken. The

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ENTRANCE to the NATIONAL CLUB, LIMA

PUZZLES ARE EASY FOR MISSING LETTER EXPERT



SORTING MISDIRECTED FOREIGN LETTERS

"A LISBURGO TECHSE. There's an easy one," said the calligraphic expert. I peered at the crabbed writing on the envelope, which bore an Italian stamp.

"Whaddye mean easy?" "Harrisburg, Texas, of course," he remarked, airily. "This might be harder if there weren't a clew in the corner there." It was addressed to a Portuguese person at "New yord hysland." I should have been inclined to pass it on to Iceland, and there would have been tears and lamentations at Ellis Island when the wretched addressee in the detention pen waited day after day for the letter that never came. "That's 'Ellis Island,' sure enough," continued the expert. "Clew's in the corner, see?"—Epigracien.

"Here's a vague destination—'Nana Holden, Australia.' And here's a letter mailed in Russia to an addressee in Asiatic Turkey, just across the Black Sea."

"For ty?" I inquired, politely. "Search me! All things are possible in this department," he rejoined, with a shrug.

I was sitting in with the wise men who assuage the troubles of worried letter carriers and sorters of these parts. Nominally they are the missing letter department of the Central Postoffice of New York City, but in practice they deal not only with the illegible "What-is-it?"

of Manhattan, but with the bothersome odds and ends of mail from Nome to Nantucket, Nantucket to New Mexico—and up and down and back and forth in Europe.

The missing letter department of the Central Postoffice of New York City is the cheery, uncomplaining George of the postal world. "Aw, let George do it," growl disgruntled mail authorities when a baffling address descends upon them from the blue. And they push it along to New York, where we automatically solve the problem. Letters that ought never to have left their native shores are constantly trickling over the ocean to Manhattan.

A number of indecipherable addresses are produced in this town alone and by the finds in railway sorting coaches arriving at the New York terminals, but the great bulk comes from abroad in the prodigious cataract of mail sacks that keep new Americans in touch with the old country. From four thousand to ten thousand a day—generally about six thousand—are dealt with by the calligraphic experts of the missing letter department, three of whom are constantly in session and three lending a hand part of the time.

"Lomeesnes" was the town to which a letter from Greece was consigned. "Easy; Lowell, Mass.," remarked the expert. Next came a perfectly blank though

stamped envelope. "Easier still," he said, tossing it aside for transmission to the national dead letter office at Washington. About four hundred letters a day out of the six thousand make this journey. Washington is empowered to open them and look for clews to the sender. If the case then appears quite hopeless the letter goes down to the furnace. A letter from Hungary to South Bend, Ind., and passed along for transmission and delivery. Another Hungarian letter is addressed to Martin's Creek, Amerika. It will be sent the round of the thousand and one Martin's Creeks of our United States. A letter to Neme, Worb—our town—and a postal card to Schicago are dealt with. Here is one to "The Madame of the Washington Hotel, nr. Champs Elysee," presumably Paris, though it does not say so. Another blank envelope; then a pair of envelopes, stampless and bearing only a man's name scrawled in pencil. There are lots of these. It happens when your office boy has no room for other than baseball thinking and grabs

for mailing memoranda to departmental chiefs and clerks, never intended to leave the office. Ah, here is a case in point—blank envelope, with "Memo to Stuart Walker" typed upon it. A letter addressed to Miss M. L. Randall—just that, and nothing more.

Then a communication from the Pension Office in Washington to a woman in West 7th street. There is no West 7th street in New York. Either it is meant for another city or the careless clerk has not typed the numeral preceding seven, or following it. A letter to Mr. Harkness, Columbia Cross Roads. There is no such place. The next is addressed to a doctor, his home town being New York in one corner and Paris in the other. Understand that these are not specially picked examples. We are taking them just as they come, just as the calligraphic expert runs through the morning's batch.

"Here's a bit of a puzzler," said the wise man. "This Italian writes from Naples to Stesbura, Emerika. Unless I'm

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WHERE
MISDIRECTED
PACKAGES
ARE
FINALLY
SENT OUT

